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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2010

Media Highlights: US Threatens Iran; Editorial on Obama-US Foreign Policy; NPR on Water Crisis in Middle East; Jordanian Bomber/His Turkish Wife; Greek Cypriots Reject Turkish Proposals; Erdogan to Boycott Davos This Year; Baydemir on Restarting the 'Democratic Initiative'; Poll on Kurdish, Armenian Initiatives, Cyprus; Alevis Don't Trust Government; Trade between Turkey-Iraq; Turkish Stamp on Ford Auto; TV Spotlight

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - January 11, 2010 as prepared by the Public Affairs Information Office

How the US is Playing

US Threatens Iran - We Can Bomb (Patraeus)
Media outlets today give extensive coverage to US Centcom Commander David Petraeus' remarks on CNN regarding Iran's nuclear programs and portray his remarks as "Washington has sharpened its tone over Tehran's program." Mainstream Hurriyet, Milliyet, and Vatan carrying the same headline, "We Can Bomb Iran," highlight "the top US military commander told CNN that in addition to diplomacy and sanctions, the US has contingency plans to deal with Iran's nuclear programs." The leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet's depiction is "We'll Definitely Hit Iran," while mainstream Sabah says, "We Prepared Our Plan to Hit Iran." Sabah notes "the general said he thinks there is still time for the world powers to engage Iran in diplomacy to resolve the conflict."

In a related story, "US Not Sending Troops to Yemen," Islamist-oriented Zaman says "President Obama and General Petraeus said the US does not plan to send US troops into Yemen." The paper report "President Obama told People magazine that the US has no intention of putting US boots on the ground, referring to Yemen and Somalia, and that the most efficient way to deal with such countries is working with international partners around the globe. General Petraeus said during his CNN interview, that the US military does not intend to put ground troops in Yemen, a country where Al Qaeda has become an increasing threat but the US plans to more than double its security assistance funding to Yemen, from \$70 million to \$150 million."

Editorial: Obama - Foreign Policy Impact On Domestic Support

Mainstream Sabah's foreign policy expert Omer Taspinar sees some challenges ahead of President Obama connected with the sending of US troops abroad. In "Very Tough Times Ahead for Obama in 2010" he writes: "Not only the Republican Party but also the ideological roots of Democrats are disappointed by President Obama's policy. Sending an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan is one of the main reasons for this uneasiness. Young Democrat supporters believe that the US should decide to pull out from Afghanistan immediately just like it did in Iraq. The American soldiers in Afghanistan give an image of an occupation force and create new targets for Al-Qaida and its supporters. There are very tough times ahead of Obama in 2010. If there is a terrorist attack against the US this year, Democrats will probably experience a major defeat in the upcoming by-elections in November 2010."

NPR: Turkish-Arab Water Tensions on the Rise (Cumhuriyet)
Hurriyet, Zaman and Cumhuriyet report the US "public broadcaster" National Public Radio (NPR) commented that the Middle East faced a "grave water problem" and that it could cause "destructive consequences" in the region. NPR recalled the severe drought from which Iraq, Syria and Turkey's southeastern parts suffered last year. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports NPR said Turkish dams built on Tigris and Euphrates had reduced by the half water resources for the Arabs. Colorado Mining School Professor Huseyin Ameri told NPR scarcity of water stepped up the hatred against Turks in Syria and Iraq, reports Cumhuriyet.

In the Headlines

Turkish Police Investigates Jordanian Bomber's Turkish Wife in Cyber

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World. (Milliyet)

Turkish papers continue to cover Jordanian bomber Al Balavi who killed 7 CIA agents in Afghanistan and focus on his Turkish wife. Following last week's stories related to the wife's interrogation by police [in which she expressed strong support for her husband's act, calling him a martyr], mainstream Milliyet reports today the "last conversation between Al Balavi and his wife Defne Bayrak was thru MSN." Reportedly, during this web chat, the terrorist asked his wife to find out requirements for being a Turkish citizen and added that he would like to come back and live in Turkey for good. The report notes the cyber expert police teams are looking at internet sites and other related data regarding Al Balavi and the wife. Milliyet adds the police traced a 2,000 USD bank transfer from Al Balavi to his family in Turkey.

Greek Cyprus 'Entirely' Rejects Turkish Negotiation Package (Zaman)
Media outlets report that the Greek Cypriot government, at an unofficial meeting of political party leaders, has described as "unacceptable" proposals on a political settlement in Cyprus submitted by the Turkish Cypriot side, in the context of the ongoing UN-led negotiations between the leaders of the island's two communities. President Hristofyas declared that the package was "entirely rejected." According to Sunday's mainstream Hurriyet, a "Cyprus package" drafted by Turkey and Turkish Cyprus calls for a federal state with rotating presidencies, and free travel and residence rights for Turkish citizens in Cyprus. Talat reportedly responded the Greek Cypriot statement was a blow to morale, but that objections would be listened to in the "intensified negotiations" between Turkish and Greek Cyprus leaders Talat and Christofias which are to kick off January 11.

PM Erdogan and His Ministers Boycott Davos This Year (Vatan)
Sunday's mainstream Vatan reports that PM Erdogan declined to join the World Economic Summit in Davos this year which will be held on January 27. It's been learned that deputy PM Babacan, Finance Minister Simsek and FM Davutoglu also did not respond to the invite for the summit in Davos. The paper reminds its readers that Erdogan walked out during a panel discussion with Israeli President Peres in Davos last year and vowed not to attend Davos meeting ever again.

Baydemir Appeals to Erdogan to Re-Start the Democratic Initiative (Milliyet)

In an interview with mainstream Milliyet, Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir appealed to PM Erdogan to re-start the democratic opening

and added that what has been done so far, has denied the feelings of Kurds. Baydemir said "We are forwarding towards a stressful process. There is a growing gap between the feelings of the people in the East and the West. The anger felt by the people in the West is not only against the PKK but to all Kurdish people. And the anger in the East was only to the state and its institutions until 2000, now that is being totalized as well. This situation creates a big danger. Handcuffing of Mayors elected with the support of 60 to 70 percent of the voters, considered by the people as saying 'I do not give you right to exist in the democratic arena.' Let us all cooperate to disarm the PKK. There is only one way to do this: Directly or indirectly, the PKK needs to be persuaded. Otherwise, how can we take PKK's weapons away? Celebrations staged to welcome the return of PKK group in Silopi and Diyarbakir were not showing victorious feelings but it was mainly expression of hope that the fighting was over and the killings would end."

Poll: AKP Voters Oppose 'Kurdish Democratic Initiative' (Aksam)
Mainstream Aksam carries a public opinion survey conducted by A&G polling company which shows overall public support for the AK Party government's "Kurdish democratic initiative" dropped to 27.1 percent. AKP voters are almost equally balanced on the proposal with 45.7 percent opposing and 47.5 percent supporting it. Kurdish BDP voters back the initiative by 78.8 percent. With regard to the government's "Armenian initiative," a mere 20 percent of Turks support it while 63.5 percent oppose. Turkey opening its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot vessels and planes is opposed by 57.3

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percent, the survey shows.

Alevis Do Not Trust Government's Initiative (Cumhuriyet)
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that a survey conducted by the Eurasian Public Research Center with 1860 Alevis, shows that a large part of Turkey's Alevi community doesn't trust the government's Alevi initiative. Of those polled, 33.9 percent said that they were targets of permanent discrimination. Another 36.4 percent said they faced discrimination sometimes. A total of 89 percent of the participants did not believe that the AKP government was sincere in its efforts. However, 90.5 percent of the Alevi's said that they do not face any discrimination from their Sunni neighbors. When they expressed their expectations, 56.7 percent of Alevis wanted their "Cemevi" to be counted as a place of worship; 24.6 percent asked for the Religious Affairs Directorate to be abolished and 16.5 percent wanted compulsory religious lessons to be lifted. When the Alevis were asked which political party they felt closest to, the majority said 'CHP'.

Trade Volume Between Turkey and Northern Iraq Climbed to Five Billion Dollar (Sabah)
Mainstream Sabah reports that the trade volume between Turkey and the Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq reached four to five billion dollar. This amount is twice as much as the trade volume between Turkey and Greece. The chair of the Association of Industrialists and Businessmen, Dara Celil, stressed that the friendly relations between Turkey and Iraq plays a big role in this increasing trade volume.

"A Turkish Stamp on Detroit" (Sabah)
All media report that despite the US downturn, Ford Otosan's 'Transit Connect', a Turkish designed and manufactured vehicle, expanded sales to the US in 2009 and is a finalist for commercial vehicle of the year at the Detroit Auto Show. According to Sabah the vehicle's design won rave reviews and its chief designer, Murat Guler, was transferred to Detroit where he has put Turkey's stamp on the new Ford Focus, also debuting at the show.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

The 29th hearing of the controversial Ergenekon case is set to begin Monday. The case has 108 defendants including high-ranking former military officials, academics and journalists.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri has arrived in Turkey to oversee the signing of a series of cooperation agreements, including defense, and the lifting of entry visas. Hariri will meet Prime

Minister Erdogan and President Gul on Monday before heading for Istanbul to attend an economic gathering.

Representatives of some 100 NGOs have rallied in Diyarbakir to protest the arrest of politicians and human rights activists in recent operations against the PKK's KCK.

Over the weekend, Turkish ambassadors wrapped up their weeklong meetings in the city of Mardin.

Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who attempted to kill late Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square, Rome in 1981, is due to be released January 18.

An Israeli air strike in the Gaza Strip has killed three Palestinian militants hours after PM Netanyahu vowed an immediate response to attacks from Gaza.

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